United States Counterinsurgency

An Australian View

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Outline

- Who cares what we Aussies think?
- Are there gaps in the current United States approach to counterinsurgency?
- Ten Fundamentals of 21st Century Counterinsurgency
- Questions for you to consider

Who cares what we Aussies think?

- The Australian Army is an irregular warfighting Army:
  - Heritage in irregular methods since at least the Boer War
  - Common experience of counterinsurgency with Britain in Malaya, Cyprus, Middle East, Borneo, East Timor
  - …and with the US in WW2, Korea, Vietnam, Somalia, East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq
  - We retained and internalised the lessons of Vietnam
  - Unlike others, we never stopped doing COIN after the 1970s
  - We have unusually large experience (for a Western army) of both fighting irregulars and ‘fighting irregular’

Gaps in United States COIN approach?

- Seen as specialist, not mainstream
- ‘Baggage’ from Vietnam
- Tend to attack the *insurgents* not their *strategy*
- Preference for kinetic, technological solutions
- Preference for large-scale decisive maneuver based on operational shock
- Poor interagency horizontal/vertical coordination: duplication, turf wars

10 Fundamentals of 21st Century COIN

1. If it's not conventional major war, it's COIN
2. The war is where the people are
3. Attack the enemy's strategy, not just the enemy's forces
4. COIN is 75% Hearts and Minds, 25% Warfighting
5. Indigenous capacity-building drives exit strategy
6. The 'four unities' – own forces, population, enemy, world audience
7. Small is beautiful
8. Win the three-second war
9. Update tactics continuously
10. Have, and use, Operational Metrics

If it's not war, it's COIN

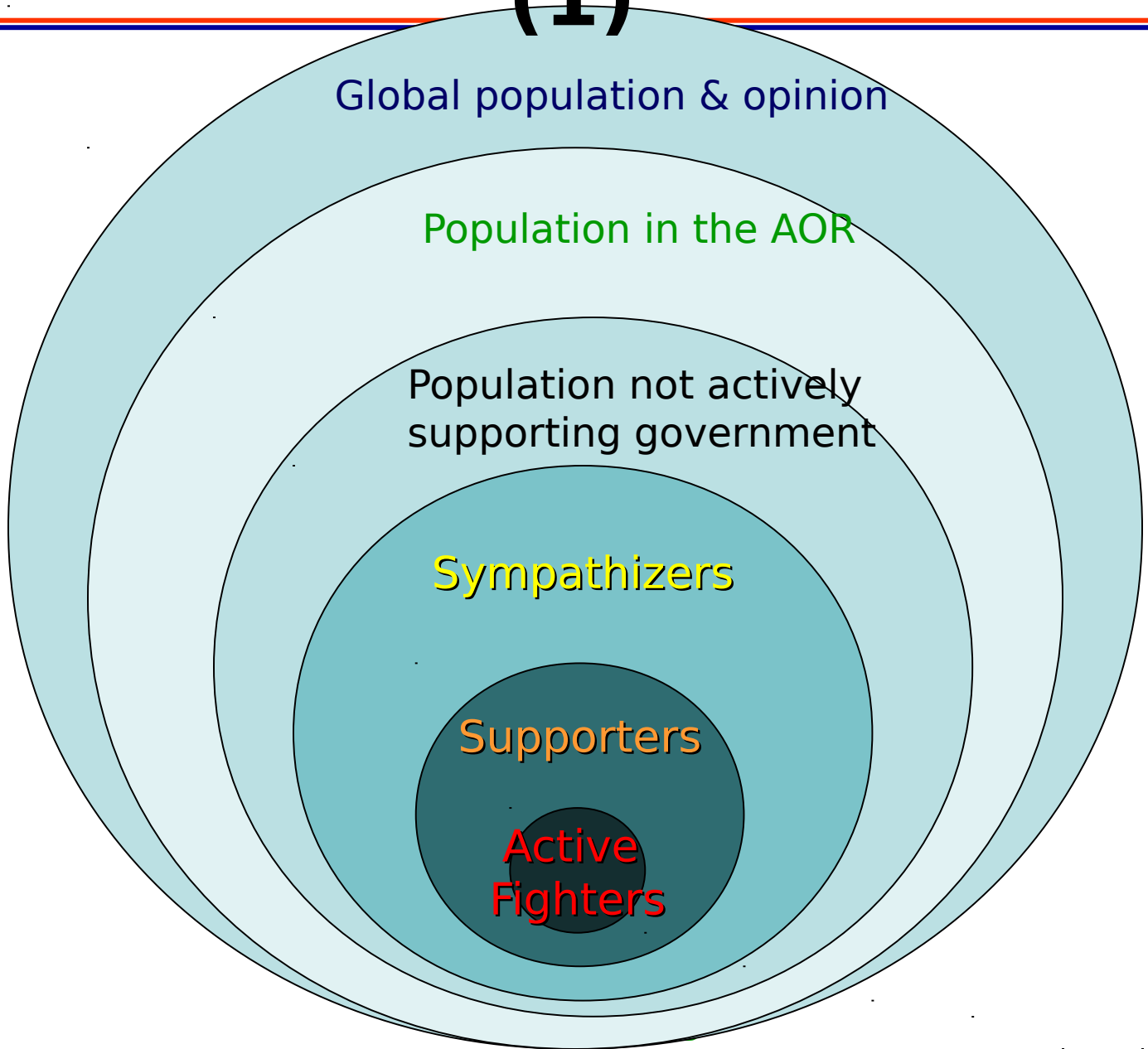
- Post-9/11, any deployed force is a target for extremists: this imposes force protection requirements
- There are two basic approaches to force protection:
  - Fortify
  - Dominate
- Non-war ops require close proximity to population, so hunkering down behind fortifications is not an option
- Dominating the environment demands –
  - Security Ops
  - Pacification
  - Patrolling
  - Route and population security
  - Offensive ops against adversaries
  - Use of local irregulars

COIN techniques

The War is Where the People Are

- Insurgency is like a virus that lives, and mutates, within the population
- COIN is about controlling (influencing, winning over, dominating) the population, through a variety of means
- The enemy hides in complex human and physical terrain – i.e. where people live
- Therefore the war is where the people are – which in the 21st century increasingly means urbanised terrain
- This makes 21st century COIN increasingly (though not solely) an urban problem

Attack the enemy's strategy (1)



Attack the enemy's strategy (2)

- UK Military Police deaths, Basra, June 24th 2003 - 6 killed in police station at al-Majar al-Kabir
- No attempt by British commanders to catch perpetrators
- Intelligence assessed intent was to provoke over-reaction, alienate pop., enable subsequent attacks

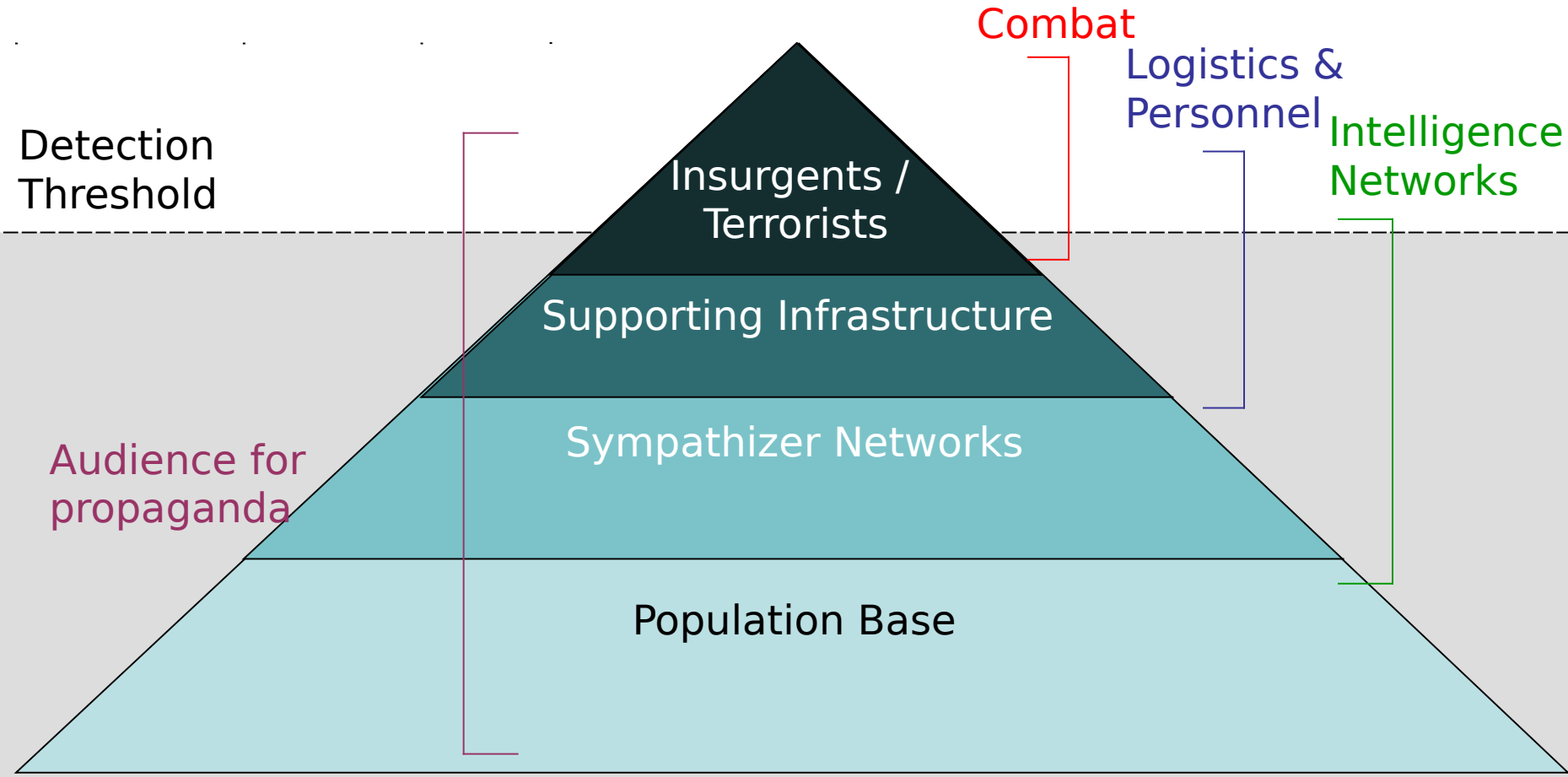
We default to attacking active fighters at the expense of attacking their strategy

Attack the enemy's strategy (3)

"...an individual casualty is like a pebble dropped in water: each may make only a brief hole, but rings of sorrow widen out from them." T.E. Lawrence, 'The Science of Guerrilla Warfare' 1929

UNCLASSIFIED

COIN is 75% development, 25% war



Indigenous Capability Drives Exit

- All COIN is fought with an eye on post-conflict power structures.
- Non-indigenous forces will not be there post-conflict
- This gives insurgents a major strategic advantage: they can out-wait security forces and emerge after they leave
- This can only be overcome by developing effective indigenous security forces and governance institutions

Therefore, indigenous capability building drives the exit strategy timeline

Mao's "Three Unities"

"…these are political activities, first, as applied to the troops; second, as applied to the people; and, third, as applied to the enemy. The fundamental problems are: first, spiritual unification of officers and men within the army; second spiritual unification of the army and the people; of the army and the people; and, last, destruction of the unity of the enemy."

Mao Zedong

On Guerrilla Warfare 1937 Ch. 6

Four Unities

- 21st Century equivalent of Mao's three unities (add globalization, CNN effect; subtract Marxist indoctrination) – this creates four unities:
  - Unity of IO activity throughout the force
  - Unity between security forces and the population
  - Unity of IO measures to attack insurgent CoG
  - Unity of public information messages for the global audience

Small is Beautiful

Mogadishu, 3 October 1993

Small is Beautiful (2)

- Mini battles
- Small team dynamic
- Small scale activities
  - Local
  - Cheap
  - Recoverable
  - Stealthy

Maneuver warfare makes conventional commanders uncomfortable with small-team ops

Win the three-second war

- Tactical actions have immediate strategic effect (“Strategic Corporal”)
- It is a “3-block war” - but the “war” part happens in 3-second burst

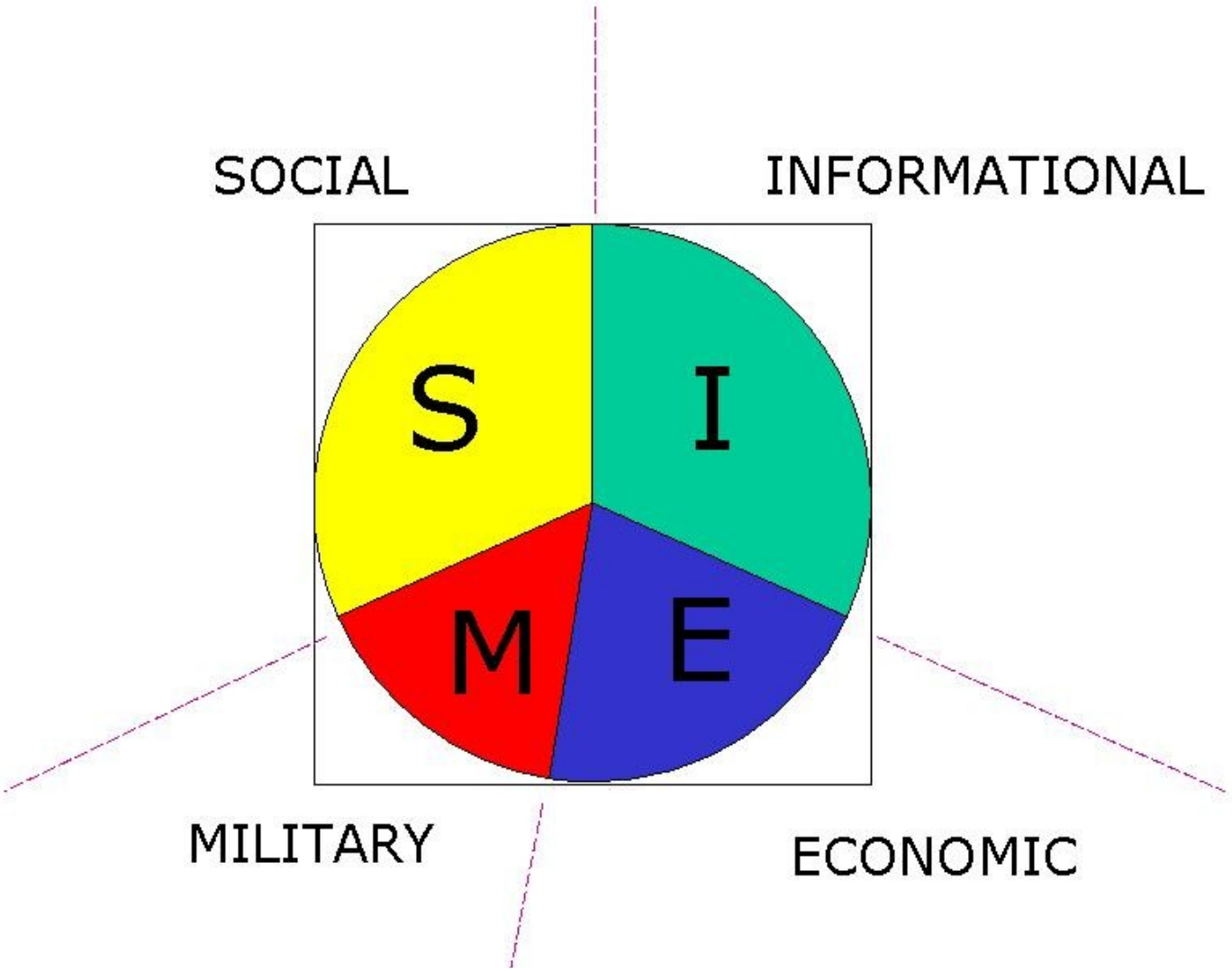
Update tactics continuously

- Adaptive enemy – stupid guerrillas get weeded out
- Dinosaurs versus Mammals
- Battle of Jenin – Israeli adaptation on D+3
- Formation tactics staff - daily updates are too infrequent

Have and use operational metrics

- Tailored to the situation – not templated from some other war
- Used across the force – applied with judgment
- Operations Analysis / Operations Research focus
- Typical metrics for 21st century COIN:
  - Spontaneous intelligence from the population (‘walk-ins’)
  - Percentage of contacts in which security forces fire first
  - Longevity/survivability of local community leaders who support the security forces
  - Spontaneous private-sector economic activity (unrelated to occupation, black market or government contracts)
- Spread of measures across Social, Informational, Military, Economic (SIME) dimensions

Operational Metrics (2)



Questions to Consider

- What are our key capability gaps (in priority order) and what should we be doing about them?
- Are there institutional obstacles to success?
- Is American military culture conducive to effective COIN?
- Who has overall responsibility for COIN within DoD?

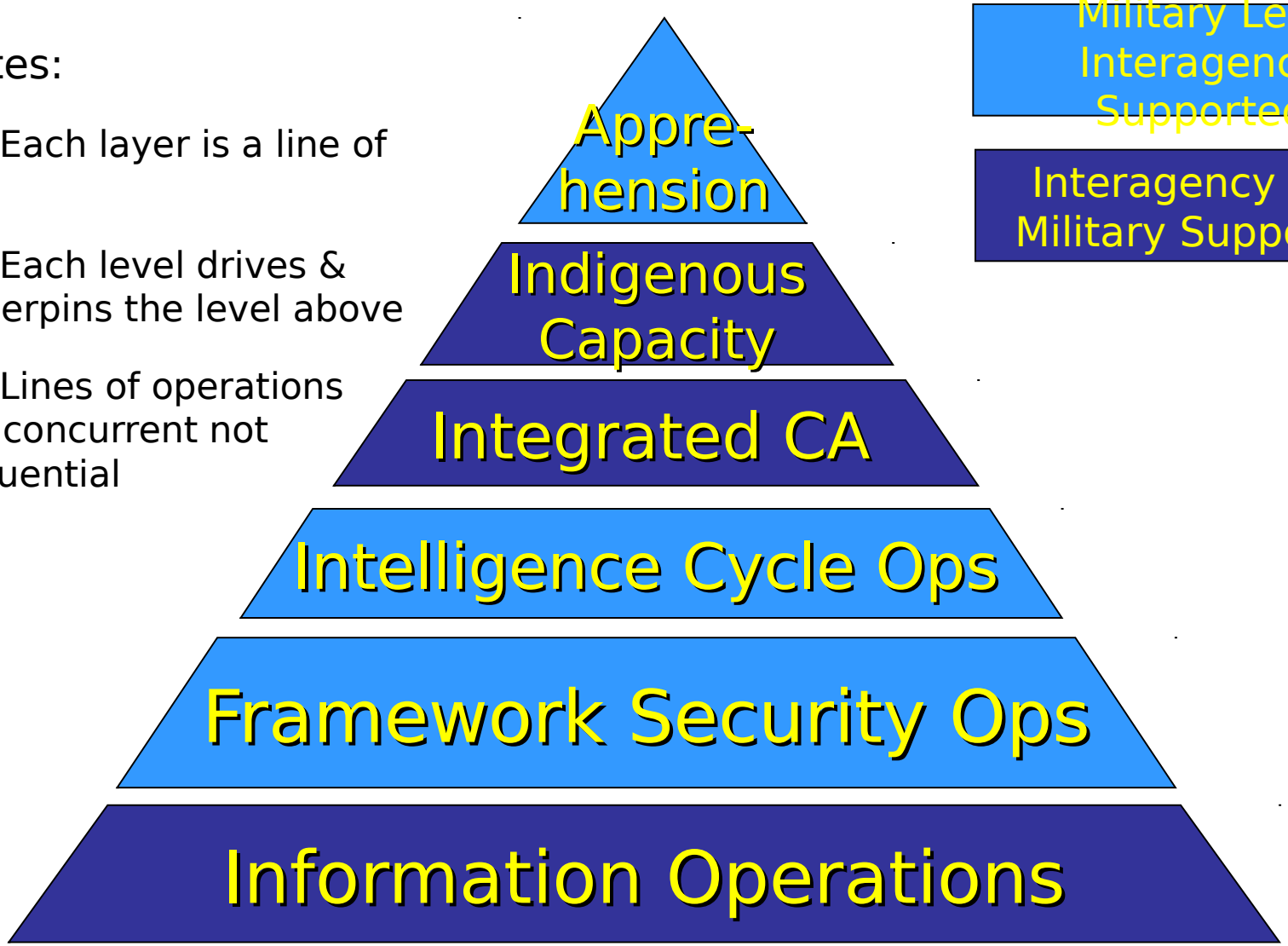
Backup Slides

Extract from Australian Army draft concept brief for *Control Operations*

Control Ops Pyramid

Notes:

- Each layer is a line of ops
- Each level drives & underpins the level above
- Lines of operations are concurrent not sequential



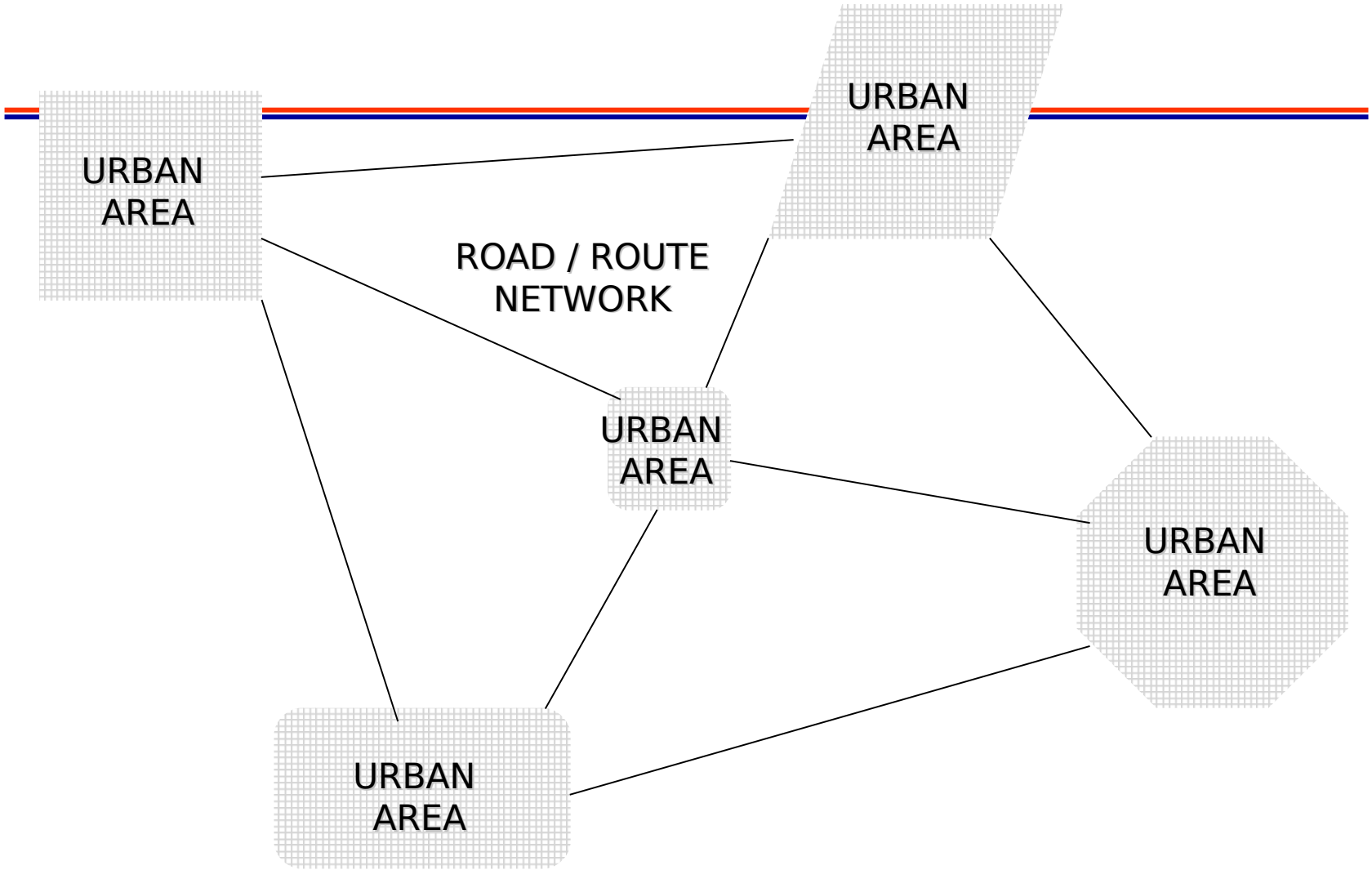
Information Ops

- Two dimensions (hearts & minds)
  - Hearts – make people want us to defeat the insurgents
  - Minds – make people believe we are going to do so
- Three levels
  - Whole force IO
  - Psychological Ops
  - National IO

Framework Security Ops

- Create secure environment that allows non-military measures to become effective

- 3 Phases
  - Establishment of control (oil spot)
  - Steady state
  - Transition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ROAD / ROUTE NETWORK
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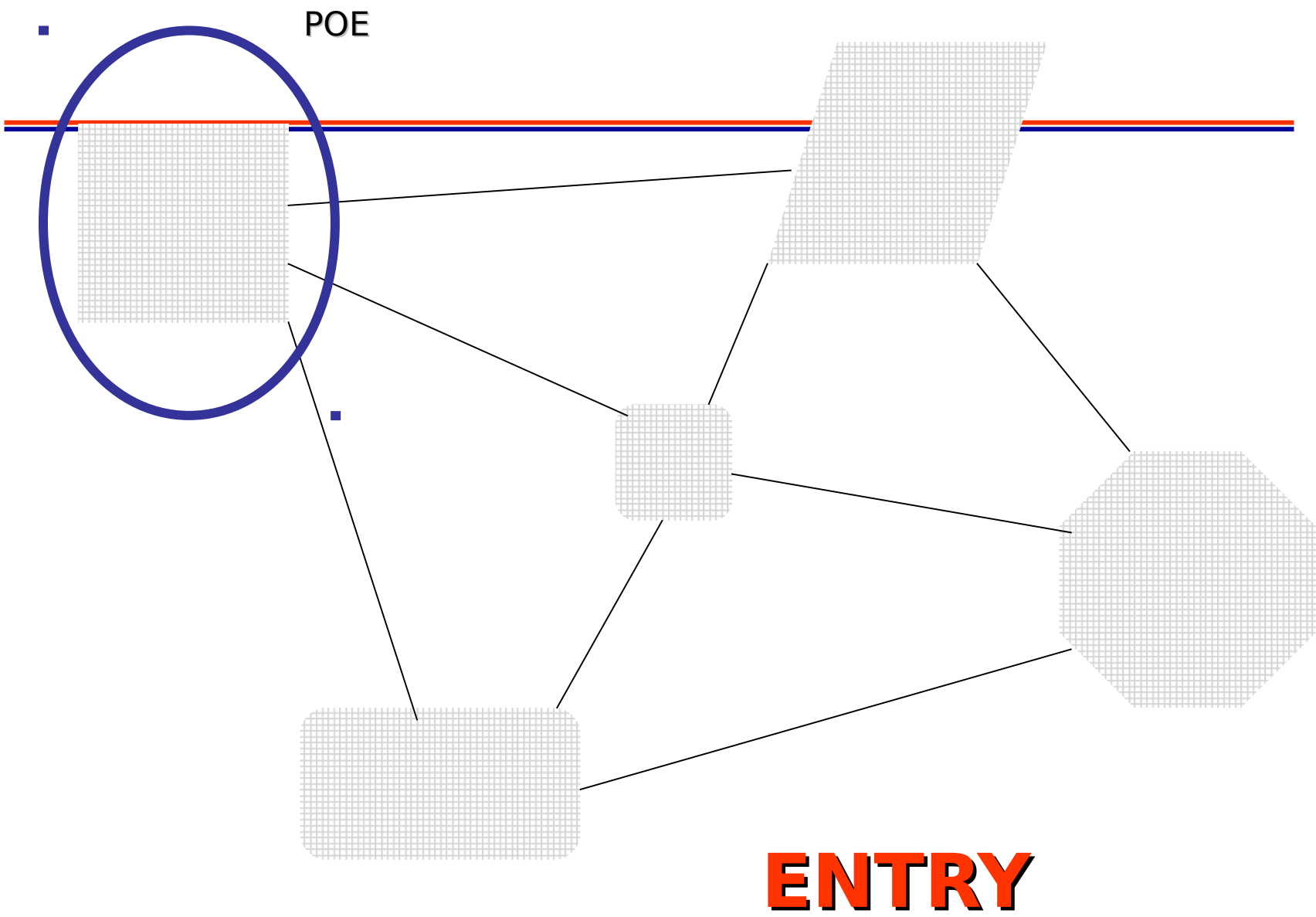
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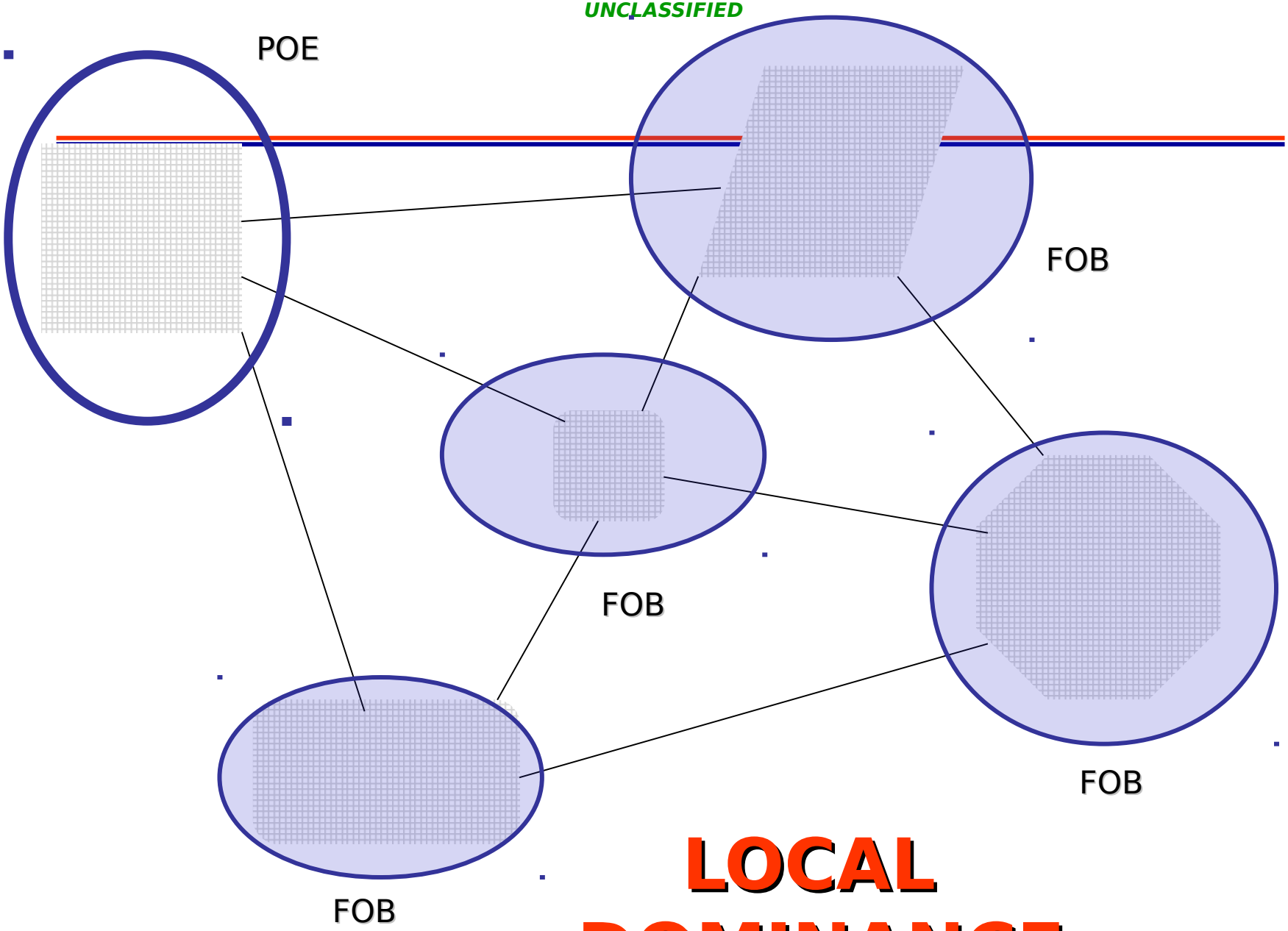
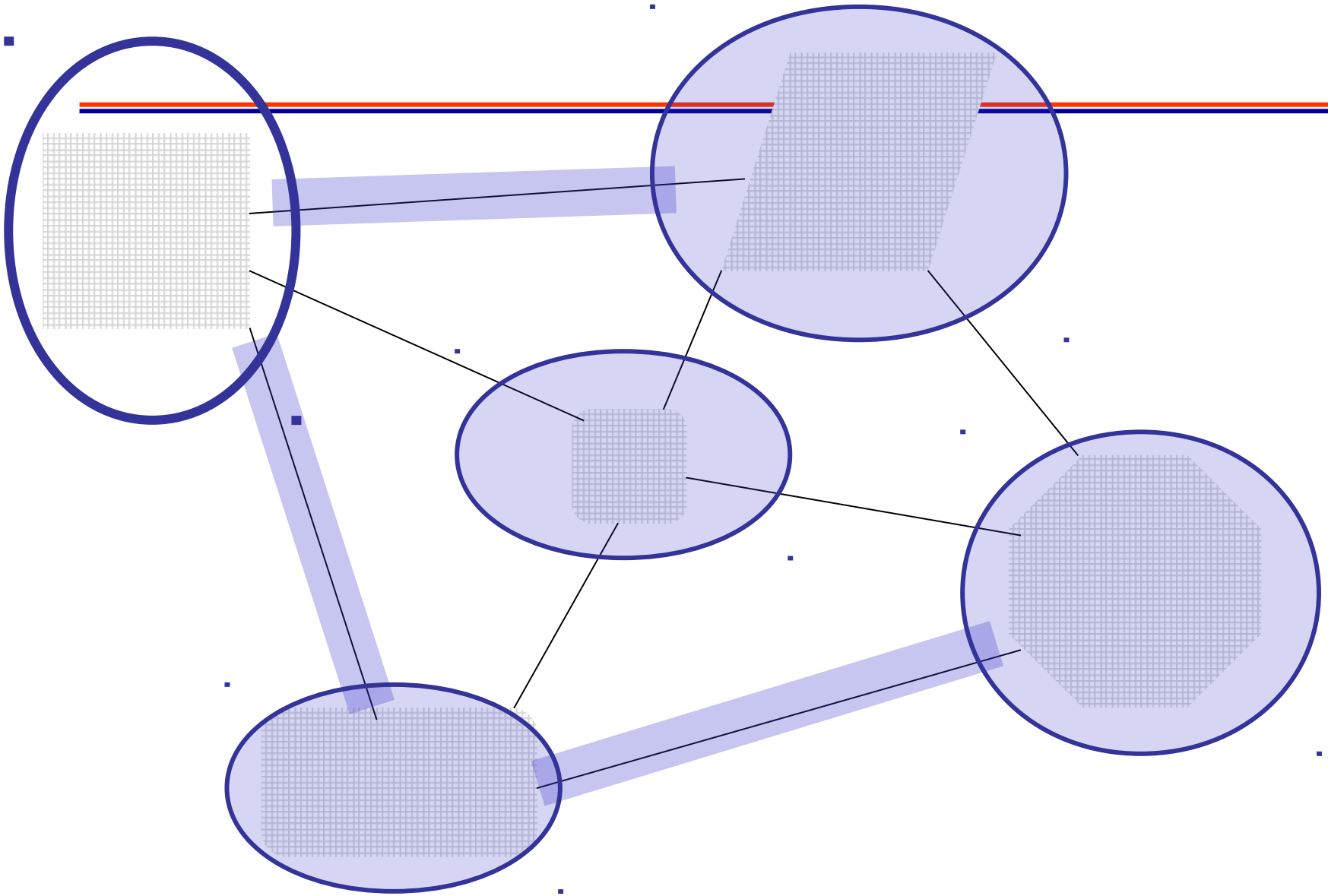
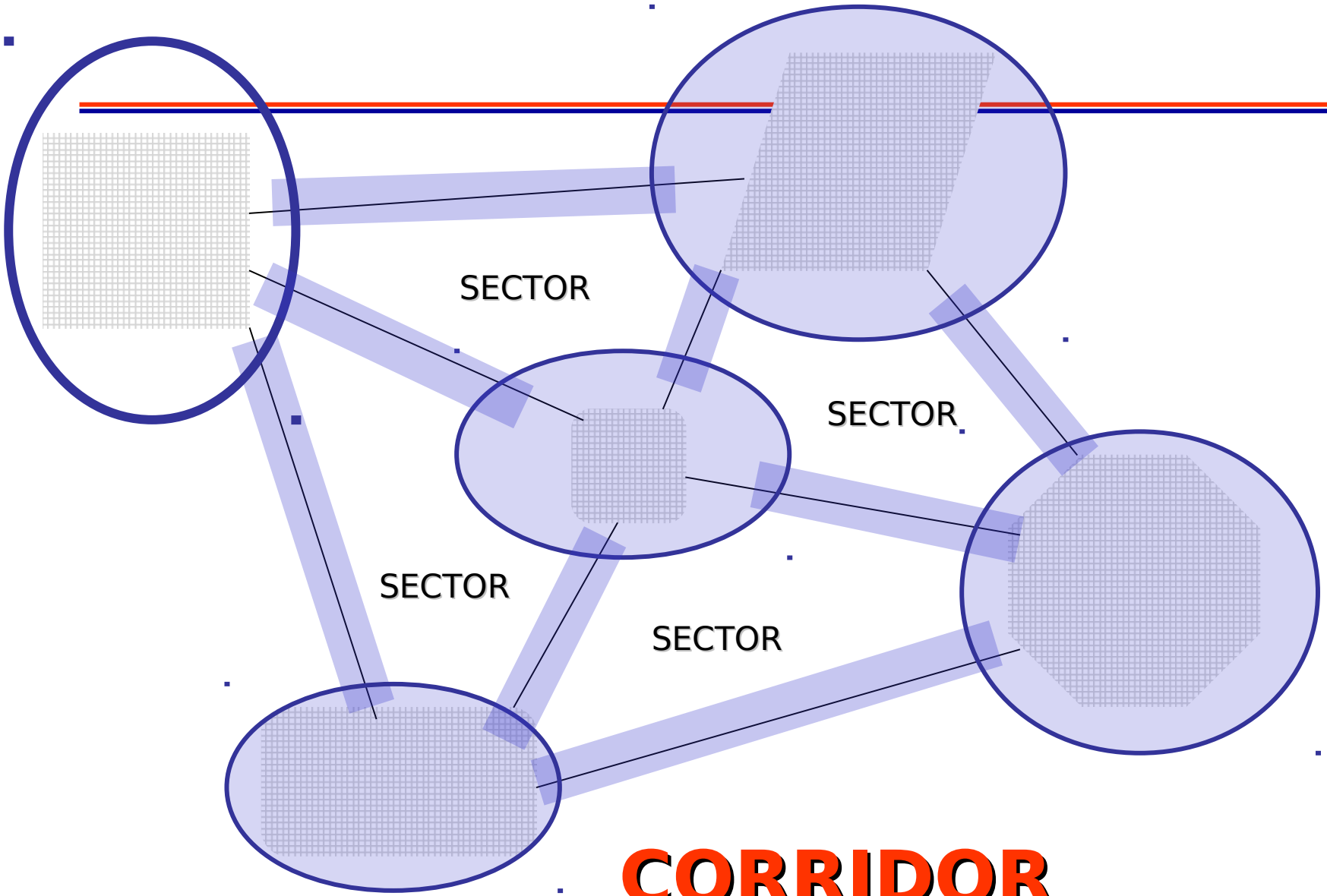
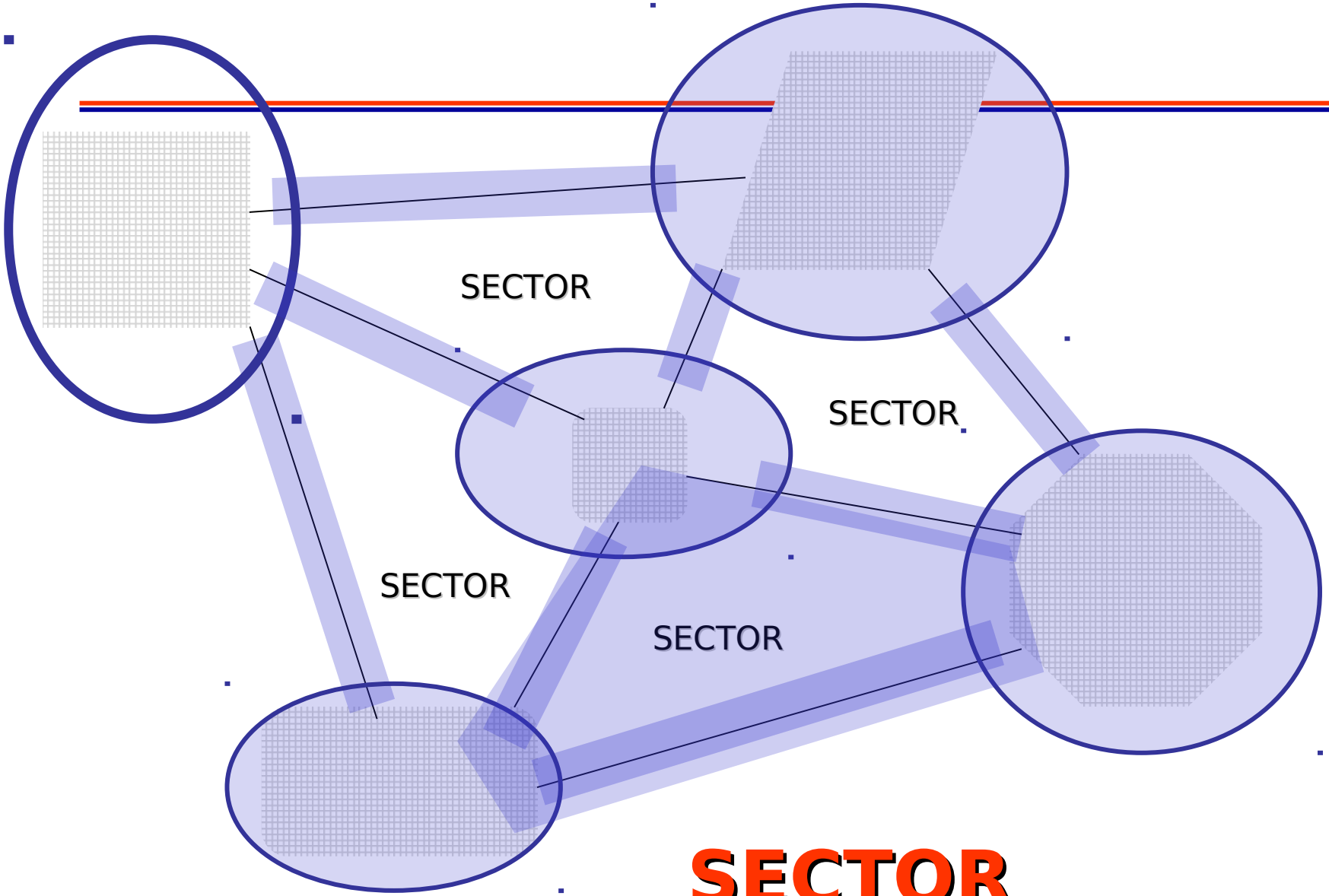


LOCAL DOMINANCE

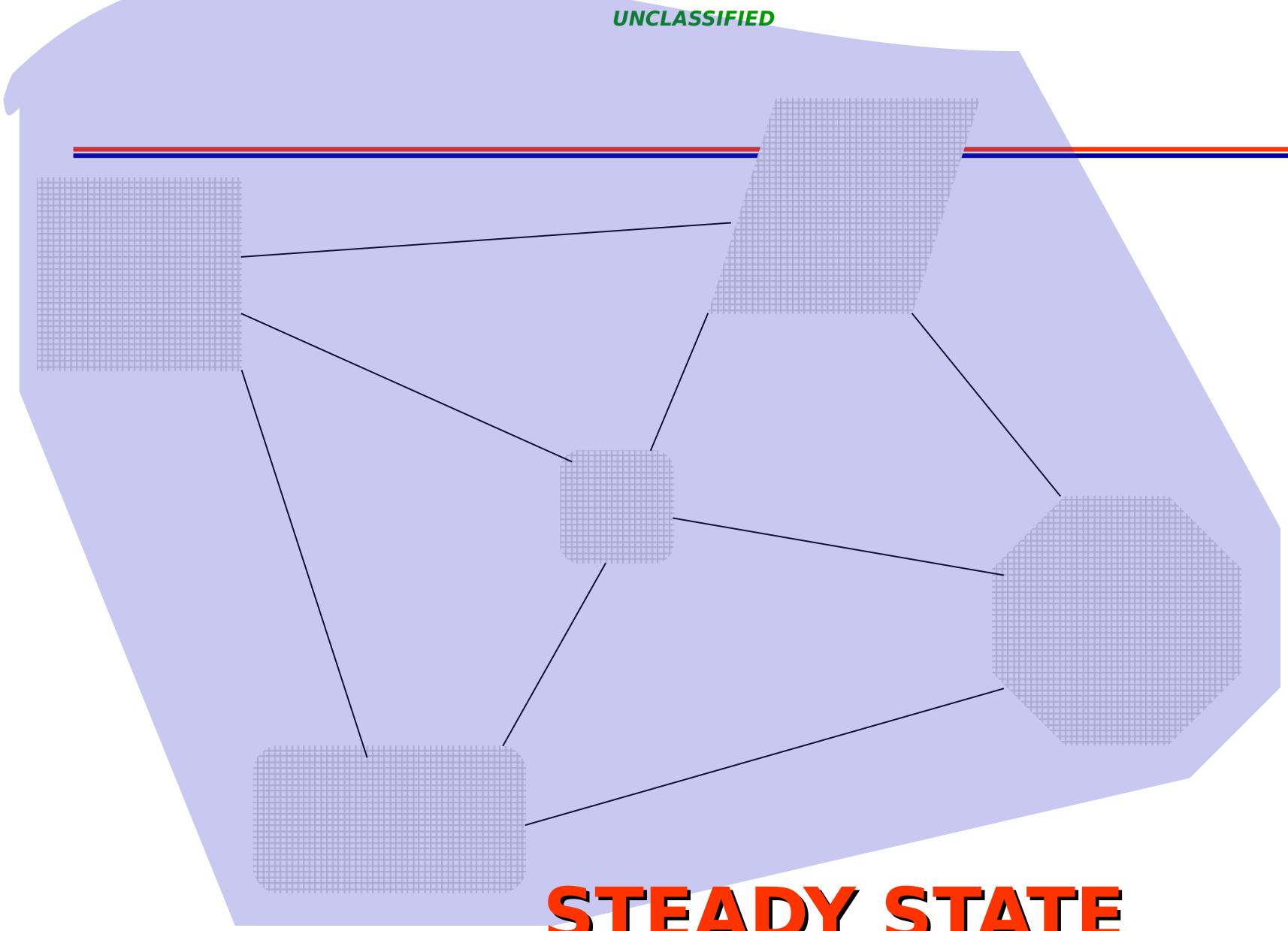




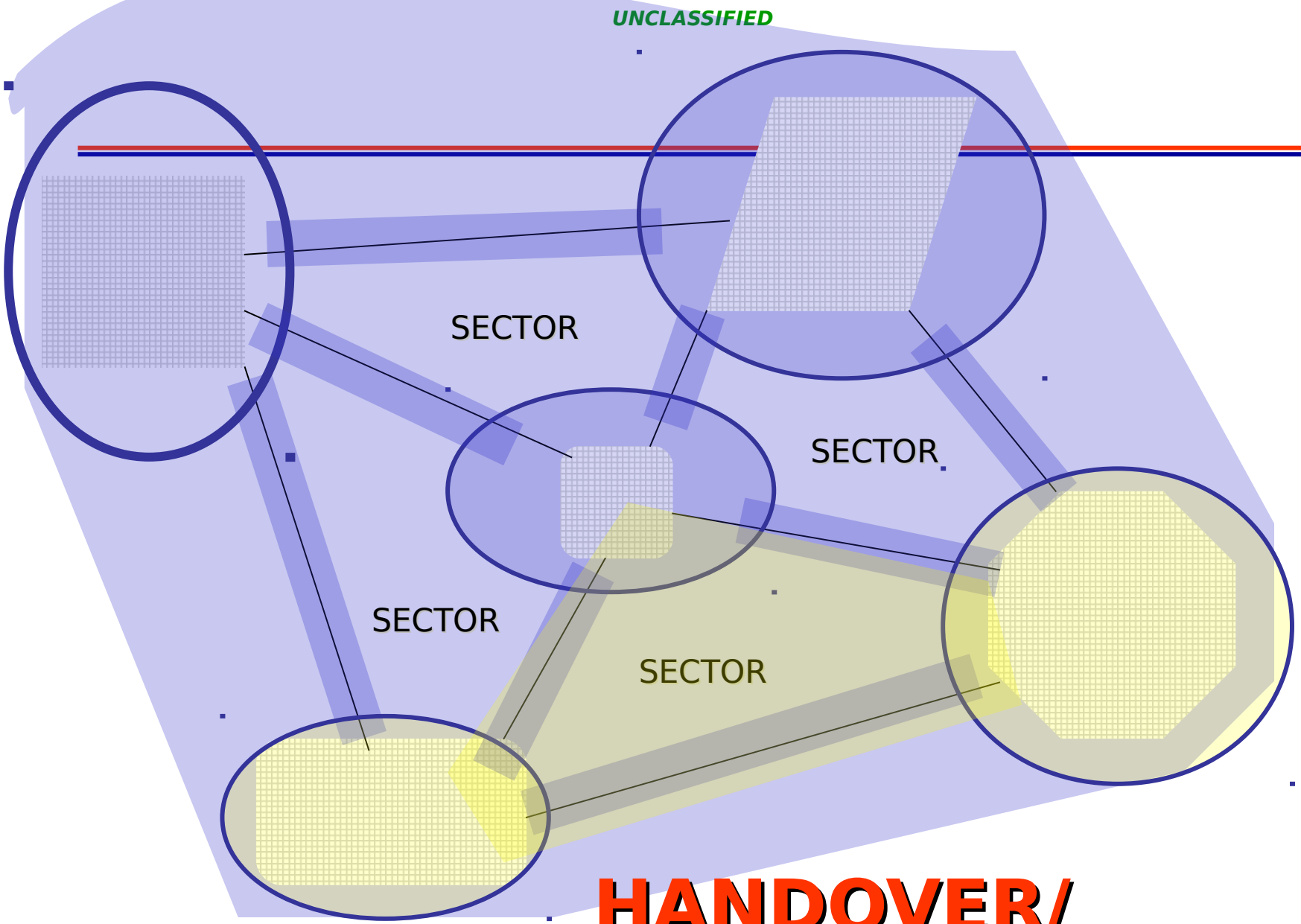
CORRIDOR CONTROL



SECTOR CLEARANCE



STEADY STATE



HANDOVER/ TRANSITION

Intelligence Cycle Ops

- Operational metric: Spontaneous info flow from population
- Local ISR drives ops, ops drive ISR
- Interagency clearance (cf. ‘Police Clearance’ in Malaya)
- Specific techniques
  - Cordon & Search
  - Raiding
  - Attacks on insurgent bases & infrastructure
  - Blue/Green patrolling
  - Ambushing
  - Deep penetration & long range patrolling

Integrated Civil Affairs

- Integrated with military and interagency action
- Not “aid and development” – military government
- Territorial committee structure
- Civil affairs reserve (funds, money, personnel)
- Carrot *and* Stick – Incentives, punitive & coercive measures
- Detailed village / neighbourhood surveys

Indigenous Capacity Building

- Create indigenous governance capability
- Training teams, advisors, auxiliary troops
- No bail-out of indigenous forces
- Don’t ‘mirror-image’ with parent armed forces
- Build local, regional then national levels of competence
- This line of operations drives the timeline for exit strategy – so start early!

Targeted Apprehension

- Decapitation of enemy leadership
- Destruction of infrastructure (cf. Phoenix program)
- Targeted elimination and apprehension
- More Counterintelligence than Counterterrorism